

Entertainment Case Study Activision

File transfer problems.
Solved.



Guitar Hero Publisher increases tempo of collaboration and speeds time to market with Accellion Secure File Transfer.

Background

Activision, a leading international publisher of interactive entertainment software products has built a diverse portfolio of highly recognizable franchises such as Guitar Hero and Call of Duty. The success of Activision's publishing business depends in significant part on the company's ability to develop high quality games. Activision's products are developed using a combination of its internal resources and external resources acting under contract with the company. External developers are typically selected based on their track record and expertise in producing products in a specific category. A developer will often produce the same game for multiple platforms and also produce sequels to the original game.

The development process for game creation often involves coordination with developers who are geographically dispersed around the globe. With game files typically exceeding 12TB, Activision found it was struggling to keep pace with new product releases because of the difficulty in quickly sharing updated versions of games under development.

Challenges

The need to seek a secure file transfer solution was brought to a head due to the requirement for collaboration between game developers in England, New York, Quebec, and California. In 2006 Activision was pre-booking seats eight weeks out for flights between LA and Europe including a weekly outbound ticket every Friday and an inbound ticket every Sunday, for the sole purpose of transporting disks containing the latest version of the game under development. Besides the exorbitant expense and time, the pace of product releases demanded a different solution. Activision looked first to

Secure File Transfer Protocol (SFTP) as a file transfer process. Unfortunately, with SFTP the upload and download process could take hours and did not provide the necessary security processes. Also frequent interruptions in the connection demanded the need to monitor the process from beginning to end.

"Building great games, maintaining the production schedule and protecting Intellectual Property are our main priorities," Thomas Fenady,

Senior Director, Activision Publishing, "Secure FTP provided safe transport but did not fulfill other requirements such as notification, site-to-site replication, and auto-deletion."

Solution

In the search for a better solution, Activision discovered Accellion's Secure File Transfer appliance, which solves the problem of quickly and securely globally transferring files without increasing IT maintenance or overloading the email network.

Within the first two days of Accellion being installed, Activision cut their previous FTP-based file transfer time from 8+ hours to <4 hours. However, they inadvertently filled up the storage capacity on their Accellion appliance with the very large files sizes used in game development. With an adjustment of the automatic file deletion policy, standard with the Accellion appliance, which allows administrators to determine the length of time files are stored and then automatically deleted, Activision was able to keep enough capacity available on the appliance to accommodate its needs.

"Accellion technology allows users to easily send protected content to both internal and external developers and partners. We know our data is protected with Accellion."

Thomas Fenady
Senior Director, IT
Activision Publishing

"Accellion's technology allows users to easily send protected content to both internal and external developers and partners," says Fenady, "We know our data is protected with Accellion."

Activision can now exchange and collaborate on two or three complete versions of a game in a week.. This significantly reduced file exchange turnaround time has enabled Activision to greatly reduce the time for game development. The company can now deliver new game versions to market faster, which is great news for fans of Guitar Hero and other Activision-brand game.

BENEFITS

- Significant cost and time savings in travel, file preparation, and FedEx/courier delivery
- Enhanced global collaboration between developers, marketers and publishing company
- Security confidence in that confidential digital assets are protected during transfer
- Quicker time to market for time-sensitive product releases

Specifications

Activision	
Deployed since	June 2007
# of Appliances	2
Location of Appliances	Santa Monica, CA Dublin, Ireland
# of Internal and External Users	500 Internal Unlimited External
LDAP/AD directory integration	Yes
Email integration	No
Custom Web Interface	Yes